

PANSIES

“FOR THOUGHTS.”

J. D. T. W.





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P A N S I E S:

" for thoughts."

BY

ADELINE D. T. WHITNEY,

AUTHOR OF "REAL FOLKS," "WE GIRLS,"
ETC.



BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, OSGOOD AND COMPANY.

The Riverside Press, Cambridge.

1879.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1872,
BY ADELINE D. T. WHITNEY,
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UNIVERSITY PRESS: JOHN WILSON & SON,
CAMBRIDGE.

PS

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W549 p

cop. 2

Only a handful, — of thoughts, that have blossomed to words, and so been gathered.

In pansy-colors, — for life is : sad and rich with tender purples ; veined even with black ; yet glad with contrasting and prevailing gold, — the sunshine that lies always at the heart of it !

They are dedicated to the friends who will read them deepest, and care for them most.

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OF OCCASION.

“ UNDER THE CLOUD, AND THROUGH
THE SEA.”

1861.

So moved they when false Pharaoh's legions
pressed, —

Chariots and horsemen following furiously, —
Sons of old Israel, at their God's behest,
Under the cloud, and through the swelling sea.

So passed they, fearless, where the parted wave
With cloven crest uprearing from the sand, —
A solemn aisle before, behind a grave, —
Rolled to the beckoning of Jehovah's hand.

So led He them, in desert marches grand,
By toils sublime, with test of long delay,
On to the borders of that Promised Land
Wherein their heritage of glory lay.

And Jordan raged along his rocky bed,
And Amorite spears flashed keen and angrily ;
Still the same pathway must their footsteps
tread,
Under the cloud, and through the threatening
sea.

God works no otherwise. No mighty birth
But comes by throes of mortal agony :
No man-child among nations of the earth
But findeth baptism in a stormy sea.

.

Sons of the saints who faced their Jordan-flood
In fierce Atlantic's unretreating wave ;
Who, by the Red Sea of their glorious blood,
Reached to the freedom that your blood shall
save !

O countrymen ! God's day is not yet done !
He leaveth not his people utterly.
Count it a covenant, that he leads us on
Beneath the cloud, and through the crimson
sea !

THE ARMY OF THE KNITTERS.

1861.

FAR away in your camps by the storied Po-
tomic,

Where your lances are lifted for Liberty's weal,
As the north-wind comes down from the hills
of the home-land,

Say, catch ye the clash of *our* echoing steel ?

Our hands are untrained to the touch of the
rifle ;

They shrink from the blade that grows red in
the fight ;

But their womanly weapons leap keen from their
sheathing,
And the work that they find they will do
with their might.

Your host that stands marshalled in solemn
battalions

Beneath the dear flag of the Stripes and the Stars,
Hath as loyal a counterpart here at our hearth-
stones

As ever went forth to the front of the wars.

Uplift in your strength the bright swords of
your fathers !

Repeat for yourselves the brave work they
have done !

We've the *side-arms* our mothers wore proudly
before us,
And the heart of the field and the fireside is
one !

We rouse to the rescue ! We've mustered in
thousands !

We may not march on in the face of the foe ;
Yet while ye shall tramp to the music of battle,
Foot to foot we'll keep pace wheresoever ye go !

Ay, soul unto soul are we knitted together !

By link upon link, in one purpose we're bound !
God mete us the meed of our common endeavor,
And our differing deeds with one blessing be
crowned !

DE PROFUNDIS.

1862.

UP from our anguish look we to Thy face !
From reeling earth to thy sure dwelling-place !
Out of our sin, and strife, and woe, and shame, —
Our crumbling liberties, and perilled name, —
Through misty agony of blood and tears,
Look we to thee, God of the endless years !

Save thou thy remnant ! Still we trust in thee !
Yea, though thou slay ! By thine eternity, —
By thy great Word, whereon our hope is laid, —
Thou wilt not crush the work thy hand hath made !

Lead as Thou wilt! We follow, though thy
breath

Call through the valley and the shade of death!

Winnow thy garner, though thy mighty fan
Sweep such an arc as counts the age of man!
Though husks of empire into dust are hurled,
And burn as chaff, to renovate thy world!
Our souls lie prone upon thy threshing-floor,
And joy that God is in their midst once more!

We stand, as chosen spirits might have stood,
In the old days that saw the Polar flood
Surge from its fastness down the planet-slope,
Grinding the mountains! Grander shows the
hope

Born of thine awful change, than shines in days
Circling in calm their age-accustomed ways.

We see thy kingdom coming! In the clouds,
Yet with great glory! Though the eclipse that
 shrouds

Our shortened noon shall last till set of sun,—
Though we grow old before the fight is won,—
Though day for us be nevermore restored,
We will look onward! God is still the Lord!

PER TENEBRAS, LUMINA.

I KNOW how, through the golden hours
When summer sunlight floods the deep,
The fairest stars of all the heaven
Climb up, unseen, the effulgent steep.

Orion girds him with a flame ;
And king-like, from the eastward seas
Comes Aldebaran, with his train
Of Hyades and Pleiades.

In far meridian pride, the Twins
Build, side by side, their luminous thrones ;

And Sirius and Procyon pour
A splendor that the day disowns.

And stately Leo, undismayed,
With fiery footstep tracks the sun,
To plunge adown the western blaze,
Sublimely lost in glories won.

I know if I were called to keep
Pale morning-watch with grief and pain,
Mine eyes should see their gathering might
Rise grandly through the gloom again.

And when the winter Solstice holds
In his diminished path the sun ;

When hope and growth and joy are o'er,
And all our harvesting is done ;

When, stricken like our mortal life,
Darkened and chill, the Year lays down
The summer beauty that she wore,
Her summer stars, of harp and crown ;

Thick trooping with their golden tread,
They come as nightfall fills the sky,—
Those stronger, grander sentinels,—
And mount resplendent guard on high !

Ah, who shall shrink from dark and cold,
Or dread the sad and shortening days,

When God doth only so unfold

A wider glory to our gaze ?

When loyal truth and holy trust,

And kingly strength, defying pain,

Stern courage, and sure brotherhood

Are born from out the depths again ?

Dear country of our love and pride !

So is thy stormy winter given !

So, through the terrors that betide,

Look up, and hail thy kindling heaven !

MY DAPHNE.

1864.

My budding Daphne wanted scope
To bourgeon all her flowers of hope.

She felt a cramp around her root
That crippled every outmost shoot.

I set me to the kindly task ;
I found a trim and tidy cask,

Shapely, and painted ; straightway seized
The timely waif ; and quick released

From earthen bound and sordid thrall,
My Daphne sat there, proud and tall.

Stately and tall like any queen,
She spread her farthingale of green,

Nor stinted aught with larger fate,
So inly strong, so surely great.

I learned, in accidental way,
A secret on an after day;

A chance that marked the simple change
As something curious and strange.

And so, therefrom, with anxious care, —
Almost with underthought of prayer, —

As day by day my listening soul
Waited to catch the coming roll

Of pealing victory, that should bear
My country's triumph on the air, —

I tended gently all the more
The plant whose life a portent bore.

The weary winter wore away,
And still we waited, day by day,

And still, in full and leafy pride,
My Daphne strengthened at my side,

Till her fair buds outburst their bars,
And whitened gloriously to stars !

Above each stalwart, loyal stem
Rested their heavenly diadem ;

And flooded forth their incense rare,
A breathing joy upon the air !

Well might my backward thought recall
The cramp, the hindrance, and the thrall ;

The strange release to larger space ;
The issue into growth and grace ;

And joyous hail the homely sign
That spelled an augury divine.

For all this life, and light, and bloom, —
This breath of peace that blessed the room, —

Was born from out the banded rim
Once crowded close, and black, and grim

With grains that feed the cannon's breath,
And boom his sentences of death!

EXODUS.

HEAR ye not how, from all high points of time,

From peak to peak, adown the mighty chain
That links the ages, — echoing sublime

A voice almighty, — leaps one grand refrain?
Wakening the generations with a shout
And trumpet-call of thunder, — come ye out!

Out from old forms, and dead idolatries!

From fading myths and superstitious dreams;
From Pharisaic rituals and lies,
And all the bondage of your shows and seems;

Out, on the pilgrim path, of heroes trod,
Over earth's wastes to reach forth after God !

The Lord hath bowed his heavens and come
down !

Now, in this latter century of time,
Once more his tent is pitched on Sinai's crown ;
Once more in clouds must Faith to meet Him
climb ;

Once more his thunder crashes on our doubt
And fear and sin, " My people ! come ye out !

" From false ambitions and vain luxuries ;
From puny aims and indolent self-ends ;
From cant of faith, and shams of liberties,
And mist of ill, that truth's pure day-beam bends ;

Out, from all darkness of the Egypt land,
Into my sun-blaze on the desert sand !

“Leave ye your flesh-pots! Turn from filthy
greed

Of gain that doth the hungry spirit mock ;
And heaven shall drop sweet manna for your
need,

And rain clear rivers from the unhewn rock.
Thus saith the Lord !” And Moses, meek,
unshod,

Within the cloud stands hearkening to his
God !

Show us our Aaron, with his rod in flower !
Our Miriam, with her timbrel-soul in tune !

And call some Joshua, in the Spirit's power,
To poise our sun of strength at point of noon !
God of our fathers ! over sand and sea,
Still keep our struggling footsteps close to thee !

CONSUMMATION.

THE ATLANTIC CABLE, — 1858.

WHEN the old mountains, o'er the flood,
 Raised their great foreheads solemnly,
Sending their first bewildered look
 Each unto each, across the sea ;
From peak to peak the rainbow flame
 Sprang with its telegraph of light,
And all the dark, dividing chasm
 Was compassed by an arch of might.

The smile that broke upon their brows, —
 A gleaming joy through giant tears, —
Was God's own silent prophecy
 And promise for the coming years.

The deep receded to his bounds ;
The lands lay severed ; but on high
Already shone the nuptial ring,
Held as a presage in the sky !

With vision awed we read to-day
The glowing augury of time,
And stretch our half-believing hands
To grasp the accomplishment sublime.
A quiet word is sped along :—
“God has been with us ; it is done.”
The marriage blessing has been given,
And the two continents are one !

O wedded worlds ! what God hath joined
Let never passion dare to part !

But, down the golden-blossoming age,

Go hand in hand, and heart with heart !

The slender thread beneath the sea

That throbs through all its living length

With common joy, — still may it be

A deathless bond of peace and strength !

So the great promise, sealed in light,

And gift that doth the grace fulfil, —

The band on earth, — the bow in heaven, —

From deep to deep shall answer still ;

Till the last angel's mighty stride

Shall span the ocean and the shore,

And floods shrink silent, while his voice

Proclaims that time shall be no more !

NINETY YEARS.

A MISSIONARY'S BIRTHDAY.*

TELL us, O seer, that dost serenely stand
Upon the Pisgah of thy ninety years,
What lies about thee in the landscape grand
Where the pure light from 'out the Promised Land
Spans with its peace the valley-mist of tears!

Read us the vision, with its backward reach
O'er the long wayfare in the wilderness,
And onward to the farther Jordan-beach

* Rev. Father Cleveland, Boston, June, 1862.

That marks the bound where endeth mortal
speech,

Where thought is life, and life grows measure-
less!

Still toiling on along the middle plain,

With the hot dust of noon upon the brow,
On that calm height we hail thee, 'and would
fain

Catch through thine eyes a glimpse to soothe
our pain,—

Rest from our future, for the restless now!

How shall it look when we too come to gaze
Forth from that mountain of expectancy
Where culminates the trending of these ways,

And all the gathered gleams of earthly days
Pour their full flood in one fair sunset sea?

Ah, useless asking! None but Moses might
Look from his own life-ending; and the path
Each soul doth tread may lapse in heavenly light,
Or wind away into the hopeless night
Red only with the evening clouds of wrath!

We give thee solemn joy, then, that hast come,
By daily access of thy faithful deed,
By steps whereof God's mercy keeps the sum,
Safely to stand where human praise is dumb,
And Christ's "Well done" is thine eternal
meed!

HYMN

FOR THE FUNERAL SERVICES OF REV. RICHARD PIKE,
FEBRUARY 20, 1863.

FATHER! our faith grasps upward through the
gloom,

Even from out these tears!
Not in the shadow of a hopeless tomb
Lose we our friend of years.

A dear and holy presence seemeth still:

Within our midst to stand,
And such a silent priesthood to fulfil
As maketh parting grand.

We will bespeak each other words of cheer !

In this our saddened shrine,

Above the darkened altar and the bier

See we a light divine !

Bid thou the life that passeth from our sight

Visit our souls with grace !

So may we also, through this mortal night,

Reach to thy Holy Place.

OF SUGGESTION.

LARVÆ.

My little maiden of four years old —

No myth, but a genuine child is she,

With her bronze-brown eyes and her curls of
gold —

Came, quite in disgust, one day, to me.

Rubbing her shoulder with rosy palm,

As the loathsome touch seemed yet to thrill
her,

She cried, "O mother! I found on my arm

A horrible, crawling caterpillar!"

And with mischievous smile she could scarcely
smother,

Yet a glance in its daring half awed and shy,
She added, "While they were about it, mother,
I wish they 'd just finished the butterfly!"

They were words to the thought of the soul
that turns

From the coarser form of a partial growth,
Reproaching the infinite patience that yearns
With an unknown glory to crown them both.

Ah, look thou largely, with lenient eyes,
On whatso beside thee may creep and cling,
For the possible glory that underlies
The passing phase of the meanest thing!

What if God's great angels, whose waiting love
Beholdeth our pitiful life below
From the holy height of their heaven above,
Could n't bear with the worm till the wings
should grow?

BEHIND THE MASK.

It was an old, distorted face, —

An uncouth visage, rough and wild, —

Yet, from behind, with laughing grace,

Peeped the fresh beauty of a child.

And so, contrasting strange to-day,

My heart of youth doth inly ask

If half earth's wrinkled grimness may

Be but the baby in the mask.

Behind gray hairs and furrowed brow

And withered look that life puts on,

Each, as he wears it, comes to know
How the child hides, and is not gone.

For while the inexorable years
To saddened features fit their mould,
Beneath the work of time and tears
Waits something that will not grow old !

The rifted pine upon the hill,
Scarred by the lightning and the wind,
Through bolt and blight doth nurture still
Young fibres underneath the rind ;

And many a storm-blast, fiercely sent,
And wasted hope, and sinful stain,
Roughen the strange integument
The struggling soul must wear in pain ;

Yet when she comes to claim her own,
Heaven's angels, haply, shall not ask
For that last look the world hath known,
But for the face behind the mask !

NORTHEAST.

' WE had a week of rainy days ;

The heaven was gray, the earth was grim ;
And through a sea of hopeless haze
The dreamy daylight wandered dim.

The saddened trees, with weary boughs,
Drooped heavily, or sullen swayed
Slow answer to the sobs and soughs
The jaded east-wind, whimpering, made.

Faint as the dawn the noonday seemed,
With hardly more of stir or sound ;

The only noise or motion seemed
That dull, cold dropping on the ground.

Vainly the Soul her frame ignores ;
Deep answereth unto deep apart ;
And the great weeping out of doors
Touched the tear fountains in the heart.

So life looked drear, and heaven was dim ;
And though the Sun still strode the sky,
Through the thick gloom that shrouded him
Scarce trusted we the joy on high.

But, sudden, from the leafy dark, —
The close green covert rain-bestirred, —

Outbursting tremulously, hark,

 The carol of a little bird !

Ah, long the storm ; yet none the less,

 Hid from the utmost reach of ill,

And singing in the wilderness,

 Some small, sweet hope waits blithely still !

ANTIPHONY.

HANGING where the May-tide splendor, pouring
down the arches blue,

Pierces, flooding with its fulness all the chamber
through and through,—

Swings a cage, atilt and vibrant with the rest-
less feet and wings

Of three glancing, golden-feathered, wonder-
throated little things.

Little bits of living glory with a melody in-
breathed ;

Pulses of a mighty music in the sunlight caught
and seethed,

Till it grew concrete about them, shaped a body
and a bound

For the throbbing soul of sweetness striving
ceaseless into sound.

Scanted in their glimpse of heaven, peering with
their witless eyes

Outward, where the unmeasured answer to their
untaught yearning lies ;

Fluttering with a secret impulse kindred to the
summer breeze,

Springing to an unknown motion of the far-off
forest trees.

So God plumeth many a spirit, still withholding
space to soar ;

Bids it wait with folded pinion till He openeth
the door :

Seals a sense that still respondeth dimly to some
distant good,

Stirring all the mortal nature with an unborn
angelhood.

Sitting in the quiet chamber, where that magic
of the May

Glorified each dull surrounding with the over-
flow of day,

Only their soft song and flutter moved the silence
of the room,

And the clock upon the mantel telling out the
strokes of doom.

Saying sternly, and repeating, with a cadence
sure and slow,—

While with onward march the minutes, pauseless
and returnless, go,

“Speeding, speeding, ever speeding, — ebbing,
ebbing, still away!

Minutes, hours, and breath, and being! — life, and
death, and night, and day!”

Still I heard as one unheeding, listening but the
softened strain

Of the prisoned joy that smote me with a strange
rebuke of pain ;

So its semblance did interpret hindered hopes
my life had known,

Waiting God's divine releasing, as these waited
for mine own.

Rising up, with ready finger straight I set the
door awide ;

Swift they claimed the offered franchise, with
its compass satisfied.

Back and forth throughout the chamber, in their
joy they went and came ;

Then, as in a still assurance, settled o'er the
window-frame.

Presently a clear, triumphant pæan cleft the
startled air ;

Notes that flashed like falling rain-drops, bright
and sudden, everywhere ;

Slender breaths of piercing sweetness, like keen
needleshafts of sound,

Then a tender, tremulous rapture, and a quiet
closing round.

Quiet. Yet from o'er the mantel came those
urgent strokes of time,

Meting the unmeasured stillness as a thought
is pulsed with rhyme ;

With their deep insistence uttering self-same
syllables alway, —

“ Minutes, hours, and breath, and being ! — life,
and death, and night, and day ! ”

While the birds above the casement, like souls
stricken into shame, —

All their sudden burst of joyance quivered out,
like taper-flame, —

Side by side sat hushed and awestruck, hearken-
ing as with holden breath ;

Every little heart-beat merging in those cadences
of death !

Ah, methought, the old incongruence ! still the
strangeness and the strife !

Still the weary counterpoising, sense with soul,
and law with life !

Feeling only for a little, what it is to wear the
wings ;

Just a breath of perfect music while the uncaged
spirit sings ;

Then the confine shutting round us, and a dull,
relentless tone

Finer utterance overbearing with the pressure of
its own.

Yet, with all its hard repeating, tells the letter
less or more

Than the brief and sweet revealing of the gospel
gone before ?

RELEASED.

A LITTLE, low-ceiled room. Four walls
Whose blank shut out all else of life,
And crowded close within their bound
A world of pain, and toil, and strife.

Her world. Scarce furthermore she knew
Of God's great globe that wondrously
Outrolls a glory of green earth
And frames it with the restless sea.

Four closer walls of common pine ;
And therein lying, cold and still,

The weary flesh that long hath borne
Its patient mystery of ill.

Regardless now of work to do,
No queen more careless in her state,
Hands crossed in an unbroken calm ;
For other hands the work may wait.

Put by her implements of toil ;
Put by each coarse, intrusive sign ;
She made a Sabbath when she died,
And round her breathes a rest divine.

Put by, at last, beneath the lid,
The exempted hands, the tranquil face ;

Uplift her in her dreamless sleep,
And bear her gently from the place.

Oft she hath gazed, with wistful eyes,
Out from that threshold 'on the night ;
The narrow bourn she crosseth now ;
She standeth in the eternal light.

Oft she hath pressed, with aching feet,
Those broken steps that reach the door ;
Henceforth, with angels, she shall tread
Heaven's golden stair, forevermore !

OVERSWEPT.

A PICTURE.

I SIT by a window high
Looking out among waving trees
That, across the blue of the sky,
Move daintily with the breeze.
And the draperies of green,
And that purity serene,
And the clouds of floating white
Shining in upper light,
Are all that may be seen.

The world is beneath me, low,
As if upon bended knee

Receiving the chrism that so
 . Baptizeth her gloriously ;
For the light is like answer given
From the open gates of heaven
To prayers from the souls of her saints, that
 rise
Through the tender noon-hush, into the skies.

And the silently folding air
Is luminous everywhere
 With a misty shimmer of gold ;
Till but for the sweet and merciful blue
 In the far, deep heaven unrolled, —
The mystery infinite presence comes through, —
Struck by the glory unconfined,
The soul and the vision alike were blind.

From the chambers of the west

There cometh a rush and a stir ;

And across the Noon's deep rest

A thrill that arouseth her.

For the Wind hath lifted his wings

In the heights where his hidings are,

And the earth, with tremulous shudderings,

Acknowledgeth him afar.

A gloom creeps over the gold

From a pall with a waving fringe

That against the sunlight is suddenly rolled,

And the tree-tops huddle and cringe

In the first, quick whisper of the blast

That down from the great hills hurrieth fast.

And the sweeping, wavering cloud
Is seen as a distant rain
That rustles its garments aloud,
And poureth along the plain.

The quivering forest groans,
And tosses her arms on high,
And struggles, and writhes, and moans,
Like a soul in agony.
Till her high imperial crown,
In cowering panic and fear,
At the pitiless presence near,
Bends blindly and wretchedly down,
And the tempest, that comes with a terrible stride,
Sets his dusky foot on her forehead of pride.

The valley is filled with mist ;
 With a drifting, powdery cloud ;
And the hills that the sunlight kissed
 Are wrapped in a winding shroud.
Yet afar off, over the sea
 And along the distant shore,
Still a moment, quenchlessly,
 Doth an unreach'd splendor pour ;
Like a hope kept safe in the coming years
For a life that looks on through a mist of tears.

While the rain from overhead,
 With a steep and passionate rush,
 A sounding sweep and crush,
Cometh down like drops of lead ;
And on field, and forest, and hill,

The terror and struggle are past ;
For the paralyzed earth is still
In the clutch of the storm at last. .
And high in his towering pride
Doth the sheeted giant stand,
With his watery robe unfolded wide
And trailing along the land.

Yet look ! for its border is riven !
Already the light of the skies
Hath touched with the beauty of heaven
The hem that behind him lies ;
And while with a face of wrath
He hasteneth on to the sea,
The step of the sunbeam along his path
Is following urgently.

Ah, thus to the eyes that look below
From the far-off heights of the heavenly
 , towers
On the birth and end of this life of ours,
Doth it still from glory to glory go, —
From the sun-bathed hills to the deep serene, —
Though the shifting storm may hang between !

BEAUTY FOR ASHES.

WE have no glory of the woods this year!
The Summer lieth dead upon her bier,
And parched and brown, with faint and fluttering
 fall,

Gaunt arms drop down her melancholy pall.

Like some remorseful spirit she hath gone,
Finding no wedding garment to put on ;
From fever dropt to silence ; day by day,
Her green hope lost, — so perishing away.

All passion-burned were her meridian hours,
Untouched by any tenderness of showers :

Too late the wild winds and the penitent rain
Vex the dead days that are not born again.

So said we in the early autumn-time,
Missing the red leaf and the golden prime ;
And still the rain fell with sweet, patient woe,
Like heart sin-broken, that can only so.

Then there befell a wonder. Scathed and burned,
Great trees stood leafless ; but the earth-soul
 yearned

Toward her salvation, and it came to pass,—
Green resurrection of young, gentle grass.

Fair in October as it had been May !
No matter for the season passed away,

For shortening suns, or useless little while :
Heaven's outright grace gave back that vernal
smile.

We missed no more the golden and the red,
For joy that the deep heart was quick, not dead.
We saw as angels see ; through loss and sinnings :
All times are spring to God's dear new be-
ginnings.

A RHYME OF MONDAY MORNING.

ONE half the world is wringing wet,
Or on the lines a-drying ;
That so the seven days' smirch may get
A weekly purifying.

A smoke goes up through all the air,
And dims its summer glory ;
Like that which doth the torment bear
Of souls in purgatory.

Vainly to shun the tax we seek ;
In penance for our sinning,

One day is forfeit from the week,
To make a clean beginning.

For, gathering stain as on we go, —
Type of our shame and sorrow, —
White robes we wore but yesterday
Are in the suds to-morrow.

Ah, life without and life within
In unison consenting!
Six days contracting soil and sin;
One, washing and repenting!

O world, once swept with awful flood
From ages of pollution!

O nations, cleansed with fire and blood
In day of absolution !

May God assoilzie all at last !

Of all be loving-heedful !

And place us where, earth's purging past,

No washing-day is needful !

THE LAST REALITY.

A CHILD'S SATIRE.

CHILDREN want always the "truliest" things,

The things that come nearest to life ;

Grown-up and real : for — sweet little souls —

They *believe* in the world and his wife !

Grown-up *is* real : we stand in the light

Of their heaven with our pitiful shows,

Till the sham of our living become to their sight

Most in earnest of all that it knows.

Kathie wanted a doll for her Christmas this year,

A doll that could do something grand ;

“Not cry ; that ’s for babies” ; nor might it suffice
That she simply could sit and could stand.

“And I don’t care for eyes that will open and
shut.”

“You did.” “Well, the care is all gone.

I ’ve seen ’em enough, mamma ; *I want a doll
With hair that takes off and puts on!*”

THE THREE LIGHTS.

My window that looks down the west,
Where the cloud-thrones and islands rest,
One evening, to my random sight,
Showed forth this picture of delight.

The shifting glories were all gone ;
The clear blue stillness coming on ;
And the soft shade, 'twixt day and night
Held the old earth in tender light.

Up in the ether hung the horn
Of a young moon ; and, newly born

From out the shadows, trembled far
The shining of a single star.

Only a hand's breadth was between :
So close they seemed, so sweet-serene,
As if in heaven some child and mother,
With peace untold, had found each other.

Then my glance fell from that fair sky
A little down, yet very nigh,
Just where the neighboring tree-tops made
A lifted line of billowy shade, —

And from the earth-dark twinkled clear
One other spark, of human cheer ;
A home-smile, telling where there stood
A farmer's house beneath the wood.

Only these three in all the space ;
Far telegraphs of various place.
Which seeing, this glad thought was mine,—
Be it but little candle-shine,

Or golden disk of moon that swings
Nearest of all the heavenly things,
Or world in awful distance small,
One Light doth feed and link them all !

HEARTH-GLOW.

In the fireshine at the twilight,
The pictures that I see
Are less with mimic landscape bright
Than with life and mystery.

Where the embers flush and flicker
With their palpitating glow,
I see, fitfuller and quicker,
Heart-pulses come and go.

And here and there, with eager flame,
A little tongue of light

Upreaches earnestly to claim,

A somewhat out of sight.

I know, with instinct sure and high,

A somewhat must be there ;

Else should the fiery impulse die

In ashes of despair.

Through the red tracery I discern

A parable sublime ;

A solemn myth of souls that burn

In ordeals of time.

How the life-spark yearns and shivers

Till the whiteness o'er it creep !

Till the last, pale hope outquivers,

And quenches into sleep !

Till 'mid the dust of what has been,
It lieth dim and cold ;
Yet holdeth secretly, within,
Heart-fervor, as of old !

As from the darkening fireside
I slowly turn away,
I think how souls of men abide
The breaking of the day

When a morning touch shall stir again
Those ashes of the night
That gathered o'er our hearts of pain
To keep their life alight !

IRIDESCENCE.

A LESSON OF A SOAP-BUBBLE BENEATH A GAS-LIGHT.

A DROP, a breath, and lo! a sphere,
Born instant and immaculate,
In ring of silver resteth clear,
Like soul in circle of her fate.

As life that drinks the eternal light,
It lies within the effulgent glow
Out from whose depth, untracked of sight,
Pulsès of beauty fill and flow.

Gather and flow, as sure and swift,
In self-same order, one by one,

As the great waves that earthward drift
Down from the heart-beats of the sun !

It seizes first the crimson gleam
That morning lights in eastern skies,
That bathes in one resplendent beam
All heaven to eager morning eyes.

Day's primal and redundant flower ;
Life's earliest flush and plenitude ;
The rose-bloom of earth's jubilant hour ;
Her passionate overflow of good.

God giveth. Not his best at first ;
He who set forth the feast of old
Began with wine that was the worst ;
After the crimson comes the gold.

The gold gives way to gentler green ;
The green still calmeth into blue ;
The rays grow tender and serene,
As thins the film they brighten through.

A nobler joy, a holier hope,
A simple resting in the true,—
So life within her trembling scope
Unfolds each pure, progressive hue ;

Until, just ere the veil is riven,
Ere soul resolves from sense and sight,
She catches from her opening heaven
The inner, amethystine light !

SPARROWS.

LITTLE birds sit on the telegraph-wires,
And chitter, and flitter, and fold their wings ;
Maybe they think that for them and their sires
Stretched always, on purpose, those wonderful
strings :
And perhaps the Thought that the world inspires
Did plan for the birds, among other things.

Little birds sit on the slender lines,
And the news of the world runs under their feet :
How value rises, and how declines,
How kings with their armies in battle meet ;

And all the while, 'mid the soundless signs,
They chirp their small gossipings, foolish-
sweet.

Little things light on the lines of our lives, —
Hopes, and joys, and acts of to-day;
And we think that for these the Lord contrives,
Nor catch what the hidden lightnings say.
Yet from end to end His meaning arrives,
And His word runs underneath all the way.

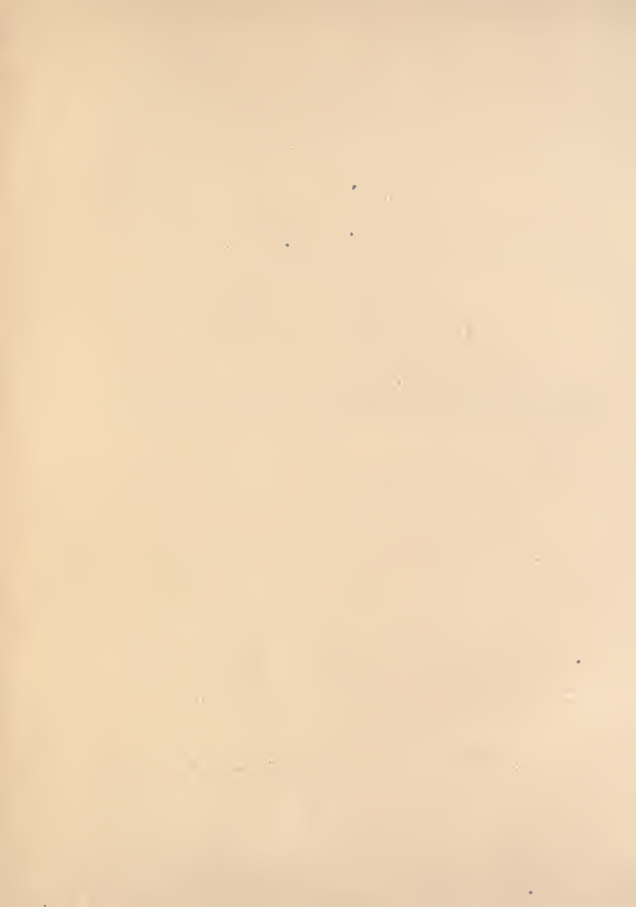
Is life only wires and lightnings then,
Apart from that which about it clings?
Are the thoughts, and the works, and the prayers
of men

Only sparrows that light on God's telegraph-
strings,

Holding a moment, and gone again?

Nay : He planned for the birds, with the larger
things.

OF INTERPRETATION AND HOPE.



SUNLIGHT AND STARLIGHT.

God sets some souls in shade, alone ;
They have no daylight of their own :
Only in lives of happier ones
They see the shine of distant suns.

God knows. Content thee with thy night,
Thy greater heaven hath grander light.
To-day is close ; the hours are small ;
Thou sit'st afar, and hast them all.

Lose the less joy that doth but blind ;

Reach forth a larger bliss to find.

To-day is brief: the inclusive spheres

Rain raptures of a thousand years.

TWOFOLD.

A DOUBLE life is this of ours ;

A twofold form wherein we dwell :

And heaven itself is not so strange,

Nor half so far as teachers tell.

With weary feet we daily tread

The circle of a self-same round ;

Yet the strong soul may not be held

A prisoner in the petty bound.

The body walketh as in sleep,

A shadow among things that seem ;

While held in leash, yet far away,
The spirit moveth in a dream.

A living dream of good or ill,
In caves of gloom or fields of light ;
Where purpose doth itself fulfil,
And longing love is instant sight.

Where time, nor space, nor blood, nor bond
May love and life divide in twain ;
But they whom truth hath inly joined
Meet inly on their common plane.

We need not die to go to God ;
See how the daily prayer is given !

'T is not across a gulf we cry,

“Our Father, who dost dwell in heaven!”

And “Let thy will on earth be done,

As in thy heaven,” by this, thy child!

What is it but all prayers in one,

That soul and sense be reconciled?

That inner sight and outer seem

No more in thwarting conflict strive;

But doing blossom from the dream,

And the whole nature rise, alive?

There's beauty waiting to be born,

And harmony that makes no sound;

And bear we ever, unaware,
A glory that hath not been crowned.

And so we yearn, and so we sigh,
And reach for more than we can see ;
And, witless of our folded wings,
Walk Paradise unconsciously ;

And dimly feel the day divine
With vision half redeemed from night,
Till death shall fuse the double life
And God himself shall give us light !

“I WILL ABIDE IN THINE HOUSE.”

AMONG so many, can He care?
Can special love be everywhere?
A myriad homes,—a myriad ways,—
And God's eye over every place.

Over; but in? The world is full;
A grand omnipotence must rule;
But is there life that doth abide
With mine own living, side by side?

So many, and so wide abroad:
Can any heart have all of God?

From the great spaces, vague and dim,
May one small household gather Him?

I asked: my soul bethought of this:—
In just that very place of his
Where He hath put and keepeth you,
God hath no other thing to do!

UP IN THE WILD.

UP in the wild, where no one comes to look,
There lives and sings a little lonely brook :
Liveth and singeth in the dreary pines,
Yet creepeth on to where the daylight shines.

Pure from their heaven, in mountain chalice
caught,
It drinks the rains, as drinks the soul her thought ;
And down dim hollows where it winds along,
Pours its life-burden of unlistened song.

I catch the murmur of its undertone,
That sigheth ceaselessly, Alone ! alone !

And hear afar the Rivers gloriously
Shout on their paths toward the shining sea !

The voiceful Rivers, chanting to the sun,
And wearing names of honor, every one :
Outreaching wide, and joining hand with hand
To pour great gifts along the asking land.

Ah, lonely brook ! Creep onward through the
pines ;
Press through the gloom to where the daylight
shines !

Sing on among the stones, and secretly
Feel how the floods are all akin to thee !

Drink the sweet rain the gentle heaven sendeth ;
Hold thine own path, howeverward it tendeth ;
For somewhere, underneath the eternal sky,
Thou, too, shalt find the Rivers, by and by !

RAIN.

FROM all this vital orb of earth
A breath exhaletH to the air,
That, heaven-distilled to equal grace,
Falls, a fresh bounty, everywhere.

The dark mould drinks the sunset cloud,
And tastes of heaven ; unconsciously
Green forest-depths are stirred to catch
A far-off flavor of the sea.

No drop is lost. God counteth all ;
And icy crests, in glory crowned

With faint rose-petals, yield and take,
And so the unwasted joy goes round.

One spirit moveth in it all ;
One life that worketh large and free,
To each, from all, forevermore,
Giving and gathering silently.

God's stintless joy goes round, goes round :
No soul that dwelleth so apart
It may not feel the circling pulse
Outwelling from the eternal heart.

Athirst ! athirst ! The sandy soil
Bears no glad trace of leaf or tree ;

No grass-blade sigheth to the heaven
Its little drop of ecstasy :

Yet other fields are spreading wide
Green bosoms to the bounteous sun ;
And palms and cedars shall 'sublime
Their raptures for thee, waiting one !

It comes with smell of summer showers,
To stir a dreamy sense within,
Half hope, and half a pained regret ;—
It may be, — or, it might have been !

The joy that knows there *is* a joy ;
That scents its breath, and cries, “ 'Tis there ! ”

And patient in its pure repose,
Receiveth so the holier share.

I know a life whose cheerless bound
Is like a deep and silent chasm
Left dark between the day-bright hills,
In time long past, by fiery spasm.

The mocking sunlight leaps across ;
The stars, with Levite glance, go by :
So vainly doth its dreary depth
Plead to the far-off, pitiless sky.

Yet ever from the flinty marge,
And down each rough and cavernous side,

Trickle the drops that bear their balm
From ferny bank and pasture wide.

It drinketh, drinketh, day by day ;
And still, within its bosom deep,
The waiting water, filtered clear,
Doth in a crystal beauty sleep.

Waiting, and swelling, till it find
God's outlet, long while placed and planned,
Whence, strong and jubilant, it shall sweep
Down, with a song-burst, o'er the land.

EQUINOCTIAL.

THE sun of life has crossed the line ;

The summer-shine of lengthened light
Faded and failed, till where I stand
'T is equal day and equal night.

One after one, as dwindling hours,

Youth's glowing hopes have dropped away,
And soon may barely leave the gleam
That coldly scores a winter's day.

I am not young ; I am not old ;

The flush of morn, the sunset calm,

Paling and deepening, each to each,
Meet midway with a solemn charm.

One side I see the summer fields
Not yet disrobed of all their green ;
While westerly, along the hills
Flame the first tints of frosty sheen.

Ah, middle point, where cloud and storm
Make battle-ground of this, my life !
Where, even-matched, the night and day
Wage round me their September strife !

I bow me to the threatening gale :
I know when that is overpast,
Among the peaceful harvest days,
An Indian summer comes at last !

THE SECOND MOTHERHOOD.

“He shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom; and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

O HEARTS that long! O hearts that wait,
Burdened with love and pain,
Till the dear life-dream, earth-conceived,
In heaven be born again!

O mother-souls, whose holy hope
Is sorrowful and blind,
Hear what He saith so tenderly
Who keepeth you in mind!

Of all his flock He hath for you
A sweet, especial grace;

And guides you with a separate care
To his preparèd place.

For all our times are times of type,
Foretokened on the earth ;
And still the waiting and the tears
Must go before the birth.

Still the dear Lord, with whom abides
All life that is to be,
Keeps safe the joy but half fulfilled
In his eternity.

Our lambs He carries in his arms
The heavenly meads among ;
And gently leadeth here the souls
Love-burdened with their young !

CHRISTMAS.

WHAT is the Christ of God?

It is his touch, his sign, his making known.

His coming forth from out the all-alone.

The stretching of a rod

Abloom with his intent,

From the invisible. He made worlds so:

And souls, whose endless life should be to know

What the worlds meant.

Christ is the dear "I Am."

The Voice that the cool garden-stillness brake,—

The Human Heart to human hearts that spake,
Long before Abraham.

The word, the thought, the breath, —
All chrism of God that in creation lay, —
Was born unto a life and name this day ;
Jesus of Nazareth !

With man whom He had made
God came down side by side. Not from the skies
In thunders, but through brother-lips and eyes,
His messages He said.

Close to our sin He leant,
Whispering, " Be clean ! " The High, the Awful-
Holy, —

Utterly meek, — ah ! infinitely lowly, —

Unto our burden bent

The might it waited for.

“ Daughter, be comforted. Thou art made whole.

Son, be forgiven through all thy guilty soul.

Sin — suffer ye — no more ! ”

“ O dumb, deaf, blind, receive !

Shall He who shaped the ear not hear your
cry ?

Doth He not tenderly see who made the eye ?

Ask me, that I may give !

“ O Bethany and Nain !

I show your hearts how safe they are with me.

I reach into my deep eternity
And bring your dead again !

“My kingdom cometh nigh.
Look up, and see the lightening from afar.
Over my Bethlehem behold the star
Quickening the eastward sky !

“From end to end, alway,
The same Lord, I am with you. Down the night,
My visible steps make all the mystery bright.
Lo ! it is Christmas Day !”

E A S T E R.

Do saints keep holyday in heavenly places?
Does the old joy shine new in angel faces?
Are hymns still sung the night when Christ was
born,

And anthems on the Resurrection morn?

Because our little year of earth is run,
Do they keep record there beyond the sun?
And in their homes of light so far away
Mark with us the sweet coming of this day?

What is their Easter? For they have no graves.
No shadow there the holy sunrise craves,—

Deep in the heart of noontide marvellous
Whose breaking glory reaches down to us.

How did the Lord keep Easter? With his own !
Back to meet Mary where she grieved alone,
With face and mien all tenderly the same,
Unto the very sepulchre He came.

Ah, the dear message that He gave her then,
Said for the sake of all bruised hearts of
men !

“Go, tell those friends who have believed on me
I go before them into Galilee !

“Into the life so poor, and hard, and plain,
That for a while they must take up again,

My presence passes ! Where their feet toil slow,
Mine, shining-swift with love, still foremost go !

“ Say, Mary, I will meet them. By the way,
To walk a little with them. Where they stay,
To bring my peace. Watch ! for ye do not know
The day, the hour, when I may find you so ! ”

And I do think, as He came back to her,
The many mansions may be all astir
With tender steps that hasten in the way,
Seeking their own upon this Easter day.

Parting the veil that hideth them about,
I think they do come, softly wistful, out
From homes of heaven that only *seem* so far,
And walk in gardens where the new tombs are !

A VIOLET.

GOD does not send us strange flowers every
year.

When the spring winds blow o'er the pleasant
places,

The same dear things lift up the same fair faces.

The violet is here.

It all comes back: the odor, grace, and hue;
Each sweet relation of its life repeated:
No blank is left, no looking-for is cheated;
It is the thing we knew.

So after the death-winter it must be.

God will not put strange signs in the heavenly
places :

The old love shall look out from the old faces.

Veilchen ! I shall have thee !





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